

**Committee on Rules and Administration**  
**Hearing on Nominations to the Federal Election Commission**  
**Opening Statement of Senator Bob Bennett**  
**Ranking Republican Member**  
**June 13, 2007**

Thank you very much madam chairman. I congratulate you for the expeditious way in which you are handling this. I have nothing specific to add to your opening statement about the importance of moving as quickly as we can because I agree that it would be very unfortunate if we ended up with the president having to make interim appointments by virtue of the Senate's lack of action.

I will share a little personal history. When I first came to the Senate there was an accusation made against me that ended up at the FEC. Being innocent in these matters I assumed that the matter would be decided on the basis of the merits. I was told by people who were more knowledgeable, "No, this is a partisan issue. You will be just fine because the three Republicans will guarantee that there will be no investigation of you." I said, "I don't fear an investigation - the merits are on my side." They said, "That doesn't make any difference, the three Democrats will vote against you, but the three Republicans will protect you." I thought that is not an agency functioning very well. It turned out exactly that way. On the charge made against me the vote was three to three and they didn't have the four votes and so the whole thing went away. But it left me with a fairly bad taste in my mouth about the way the FEC worked.

One of the things that impressed me as I look through the testimony of the four before us is that regardless of the fact that there happens to be two Democrats and two Republicans, they all say nice things about each other. They all make it clear they work together very well, and the absolute Iron Curtain between Republicans and Democrats that was there in 1993 has been torn down.

So, I look forward to the hearing. My inclination at the moment, subject of course to discovering new things, is that we ought to confirm all four of them as a group. They have a history of working together in a collegial manner, and of looking at the merits of the matters that are before them. I think that is something fairly rare in Washington, and we ought to do what we can to hang on to it.